



\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\*

## **Community Statement on the Killing of Hakim Littleton**

### **Community Demands Independent Investigation into Police Killing of Hakim Littleton, End to Excessive Force**

(DETROIT, MI) – ACLU of Michigan, Black Legacy Coalition, Detroit and Michigan Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, Detroit Council of Elders, Detroit Justice Center, East Michigan Environmental Action Coalition, Hush House Black Community Museum, James and Grace Lee Boggs Center to Nurture Community Leadership, Michigan Coalition for Human Rights, Michigan Liberation, Moratorium Now Coalition, National Conference of Black Lawyers Michigan Chapter, Neighborhood Defender Service of Detroit, Riverwise Magazine, Wayne County Criminal Defense Bar Association and We The People of Detroit issue the following statement on the killing of Hakim Littleton:

“On July 10, 2020, officers from the Detroit Police Department (DPD) fatally shot Hakim Littleton near the intersection of San Juan and McNichols. Although Chief James Craig immediately characterized the killing as an appropriate use of force, members of the community are left with many questions, not the least of which is whether the death could have been avoided altogether if officers had used the law enforcement profession's best practices and employed de-escalation techniques. In a period when the already tense relationship between law enforcement and Black communities has escalated to unparalleled heights, there is no place for sudden, aggressive police tactics. Such increases the likelihood that fear and impulse will control

citizens' reactions, and serious injuries and death may be the consequence. Community and civil rights organizations call for an independent investigation to have important questions answered about police conduct in this instance.

As word of the killing spread through the community, local protesters who have engaged in daily actions against police brutality and racial oppression gathered at the site of Hakim's killing to exercise their free speech rights and demand accountability from DPD. These community members were met with aggressive tactics, riot gear, tear gas, and brutality by riot police. Our community is outraged and heartbroken at the death of Hakim Littleton and at the brutality used against protesters and community members. Particularly at this moment, as #blacklivesmatter has become ubiquitous, we demand accountability and proclaim that all state violence against the Black community must end! As members of this community, we demand (1) an independent investigation into the shooting death of Hakim Littleton; and (2) an immediate end to excessive force.

**We demand an independent investigation into the shooting death of Hakim Littleton**

We demand transparency in the investigation of the killing of Hakim Littleton. The details of this incident have yet to be thoroughly investigated, and still we have already seen the haste with which Chief James Craig has deemed this case an appropriate use of force. We demand that an independent investigation be led by Michigan State Attorney General Dana Nessel in collaboration with a consortium of civil rights organizations (including the National Conference of Black Lawyers, National Lawyers Guild Michigan Detroit Chapter, the Sugar Law Center, the Detroit Justice Center, the Wayne County Criminal Defense Bar Association and the ACLU of Michigan). We are calling for this independent investigation because those who should hold the police accountable have failed to do so.

Hakim did not need to die. This young Black man's life was needlessly ended by state violence. In a just society, this situation would have been met with an appropriate response that sees

Hakim still alive today. For far too long, police in this country have brutalized Black communities and utilized deadly and excessive force in our communities in ways that we don't see in white communities. We demand an independent investigation into the shooting death of Hakim Littleton because Hakim's Black life matters too. As police departments across the country reckon with the racist roots of policing, the repeated use of force against Black communities, and the disproportionate harm that Black people suffer at the hands of police, we demand the same reckoning from DPD in every instance of police violence.

**We demand an immediate end to the excessive force**

Since the brutal murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers May 25, 2020, daily protests in Detroit and across the country, have illuminated the history of excessive force and police brutality that Black communities endure. Local organizers, including Detroit Will Breathe, have marched for over 40 days straight through the streets of Detroit demanding fundamental changes in police policies, such as the demilitarization of DPD and an end to the use of surveillance programs like Project Greenlight and racist facial recognition software. The death of George Floyd so shocked the conscience of this country, including those in law enforcement, that Chief of Police James Craig [reportedly issued a departmental memo about the use of force](#).

However, on the day that Hakim was killed as protesters gathered to demand accountability, the release of the names of the officers involved in the shooting, and the body camera footage related to the incident, DPD officers responded in riot gear and launched tear gas in a residential neighborhood. Leaders of Detroit Will Breathe were brutally attacked and targeted for arrest. Shocking images have emerged of lead organizer Nakia Wallace being placed in a choke hold by DPD. The unlawful detention of protester and water activist, William Thomas aka Meeko Williams, for 2 days without charges are very concerning. Further, the treatment of protesters upon arrest (transported on unventilated buses, crammed into unsanitary and overcrowded holding cells) all in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic is unacceptable. Whenever the police use force against people, a call for accountability and transparency is always appropriate; in fact

this fundamental principle is embedded in our Constitution. It is outrageous and alarming that these protesters were met with such aggression and police violence. We demand that the Justice Department seek to re-open the consent decree and resume oversight of the DPD particularly as we have seen the repeated escalation of violence against protesters such as on Sunday, June 28th in Southwest Detroit, where DPD officers in an SUV, plowed through a group of protestors who had completed a day of action and were marching back to their vehicles.

As members of this community, we demand (1) an independent investigation into the shooting death of Hakim Littleton; and (2) an immediate end to excessive force. “

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List of Signatories and Contact Information:

- **ACLU of Michigan** (Dana Chicklas, 734-945-8857, [dchicklas@aclumich.org](mailto:dchicklas@aclumich.org))
- **Black Legacy Coalition**
- **Detroit and Michigan Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild** (Julie Hurwitz, 313-567-6170, [jhurwitz@goodmanhurwitz.com](mailto:jhurwitz@goodmanhurwitz.com))
- **Detroit Council of Elders**
- **Detroit Justice Center** (Desiree Ferguson, Legal Director, 313-319-8259, [dferguson@detroitjustice.org](mailto:dferguson@detroitjustice.org))
- **East Michigan Environmental Action Council**
- **The Hush House Black Community Museum**
- **James and Grace Lee Boggs Center to Nurture Community Leadership** (Shea Howell, 313-282-7669, [howell@oakland.edu](mailto:howell@oakland.edu); Stephen Ward, [smward@umich.edu](mailto:smward@umich.edu))
- **Michigan Coalition for Human Rights**
- **Michigan Liberation**
- **Moratorium Now Coalition**
- **National Conference of Black Lawyers, Michigan Chapter** (Jeffrey L. Edison, 313-964-0400, [jelee@ix.netcom.com](mailto:jelee@ix.netcom.com))

- **Neighborhood Defender Service of Detroit** (Sam McCann, 703-867-1972, SMccann@ndsny.org)
- **Riverwise Magazine** (Eric Campbell, riverwisedetroit@gmail.com)
- **Wayne County Criminal Defense Bar Association** (Lillian Diallo, 313-719-8899)
- **We The People of Detroit**